

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS-LETTER

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Federal Council Group Plans Race Relations Studies

The commission on the Church and Minority Peoples of the Federal Council of Churches called a meeting of representative church leaders at Princeton, N. J., May 8, 9 and 10, to give careful study to a series of study documents relating to the church and problems of race, which after revision and approval of the executive committee of the Council, it is proposed to publish as study material for the churches. The Commission is under the chairmanship of Dr. Will W. Alexander, formerly of Atlanta, Georgia, and now vice-president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Dr. Alexander has long been known as a vigorous advocate of inter-racial justice. The Commission is composed of well-known church leaders from all parts of the nation.

Due to the illness of the chairman, Bishop William Scarlett of St. Louis presided. Among others present were Rev. Galen Weaver, pastor of the Church of All Nations, Honolulu, Miss Amy Welcher, executive secretary of the United Council of Church Women, Louis Adamic, the author, Dr. Liston Pope of Yale Divinity School, Dr. Roswell Barnes, Dr. George E. Haynes and Mr. Bradford Abernethy, of the Federal Council staff, Dr. Channing Tobias, of the International Committee of the YMCA, Dr. Donald Cloward, executive secretary for social education and action of the Baptist Publication Society, Dr. Frank Loescher, Mr. Eugene Barnett, Dr. Frederick Reissig, executive secretary of the Washington, D. C., federation of churches, and Dr. Almon Pepper, social service secretary of the Episcopal Church. James A. Crain represented the Disciples of Christ.

The conference gave major attention to a statement prepared by Bishop Scarlett entitled, "A Statement of Christian Principles," and to a statement of suggested procedures prepared by Dr. Liston Pope. It is expected that Bishop Scarlett's statement of principles, as amended and revised by the conference will be presented to the executive committee of the Federal Council at its June meeting for approval and release. The document on suggested procedures will probably not be released until fall. Other studies recommended by the conference for publication after revision and approval are, "The Christian Church and Race," by Dr. John Knox, "The Local Church and Racial Issues," by Dr. H. Paul Douglas, "Racial Attitudes in Children," by Dr. Arnold Gesell, director of the Clinic of Child Development of Yale School of Medicine, and "Christian Youth and the Race Question," by Olivia P. Stokes and Winburn Thomas.

Central in the thinking of every session of the conference was the challenge to American Christian churches on account of their racial exclusiveness and their failure to stand more effectively for equal justice and equal opportunity for all races and colors of people. This challenge was voiced in a statement signed by 104 prominent Negro churchmen and issued in November, 1944, which said in part, "Freedom to worship, if it means anything, means freedom to worship God across racial lines and freedom for a man or a woman to join

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After San Francisco — What?

We are now advised that the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) in session at San Francisco will complete its work and adjourn not later than mid-June. The question that will then immediately face the people of every nation represented there will be, What shall we do about entering the world organization proposed?

This question naturally assumes that the San Francisco conference will produce the framework of a world organization. This is an assumption that is safe to make. The conference will not fail, if for no other reason, because the delegates *dare not fail*. Millions of people in all countries are praying for its success and they will demand that their representatives answer their prayers. No delegation dares go back and face their own people to confess failure. There are still problems to be solved, some of them difficult and irritating. *But they must be solved.*

Some of them, such as the Polish question, can be solved outside the conference when the peace is made. Some of them can be solved by a more conciliatory attitude on the part of certain delegations, among them our own. Drew Pearson, in his "Washington Merry-Go-Round" performed a useful public service when he recently turned the spotlight of publicity on the continued 'needling' of the Russians by certain members of the American delegation. According to Pearson, Commissar Molotov proposed, when he stopped off in Washington on his way to San Francisco, that the chairmanship of the conference be passed around among the heads of the Big Four delegations instead of being given to a single individual. Therefore when Secretary Stettinius allowed his name to be presented as a candidate for permanent chairman he knew that Molotov would object. Thus on an issue of mere prestige Mr. Stettinius involved the United States and himself personally in a humiliating defeat at the opening of the conference. Our insistence on admitting Argentina caused further distrust. Not many months ago we ourselves were threatening Argentina for harboring Nazi agents. The realistic Russians wonder just when and how the fascist-minded oligarchy now ruling our Southern neighbor became a convert to democracy. Nor are the Russians ignorant of the fact that army and navy officers around Washington are doing too much talking to the effect that we must be prepared next to fight Russia. They know too that the Italians would get rid of the unpopular Savoy dynasty that played the game with Mussolini for twenty years were it not for the support given to the throne by Britain and the United States. And our reluctance to do anything that might upset Franco in Spain is equally disconcerting to them.

There will not be much time for discussion of the San Francisco plan. The need for a world organization is becoming urgent. The outbreak in the Levant and Tito's move on Istria underscores the necessity for international provisions for the peaceful settlement of disputes. Failure to provide such means may result in violence and disorder of serious proportions. Equally serious is the continued evidence of tension between

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Conscientious Objector Committee Reports

In preparation for the closing of the fiscal year on June 30th the Committee on Conscientious Objectors of The United Christian Missionary Society reports that since its inception in 1941 it has received in offerings (to May 30) a total of \$40,680.92 and has disbursed on account of Disciples of Christ in Civilian Public Service camps \$33,811.96. The balance on hand on May 30 was \$6,868.96, including \$5,451.59 designated for this cause through the Week of Compassion offerings this year. Funds on hand will be disbursed before June 30. As of February 28, the last report received, there was a deficit of approximately \$7,000, which with accrued charges to June 30 will amount to about \$10,000. With payments made during 1945 and funds received from the Week of Compassion it is estimated that the net deficit on June 30 will be less than \$5,000, which is the best relative showing since the program began. However, continuing costs through the summer months when receipts are negligible will run the figures considerably higher by September first. It is imperative therefore, according to the committee, that friends send in their gifts before June 30. A growing number of individuals and churches making contributions to this cause are asked to remember the Conscientious Objector Fund in making remittances on or before the close of the fiscal year. Contributions should be sent to the Conscientious Objector Committee, 222 S. Downey Ave., Indianapolis 7, Indiana.

There are at present 54 Disciples of Christ in Civilian Public Service. The number is subject to variation due to the fact that new men are being inducted and others are being discharged for physical disability, over age, etc.

The CPS Unit at the State Mental Hospital at Logansport, Indiana, under the direction of the department of Social Welfare of The United Society, now has a personnel of 21 men, with Harmon Wilkinson, of the Hollywood-Beverly Church, Los Angeles, and former state chairman of young people's work of that area, as assistant director. Dr. L. C. Williams, superintendent of the hospital, expresses himself as well pleased with the work of the unit and as anxious to increase the number of men as rapidly as possible. In war-time the care of the mentally ill is one of our most serious social problems and Dr. Williams says he could use at least 40 men as attendants and ward staff if they were available.

While Disciples of Christ have no grounds for self-commendation over their support of C.O.s during the present war, the record is at least better than it was in

World War I, when no effort whatever was made to give sympathy and support to the few Disciples who refused to participate in that conflict.

Yale Fellowships to Richeson, Nelson and Gemmer

The Yale School of Alcohol Studies announces that fellowships covering all expenses for the summer session have been awarded to Forrest L. Richeson, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, John F. Nelson, of Clarksburg, West Virginia, and Robert S. Gemmer, of Indianapolis, Indiana. Mr. Richeson is pastor of the Portland Avenue Christian Church, of Minneapolis and a graduate of Drake University. He received his seminary training in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and the Disciples Divinity House. Mr. Nelson is a graduate of Bethany College and took his B.D. at Yale. Mr. Gemmer is a graduate of Indiana University and is a student in the Chicago Theological Seminary. His fellowship was awarded as a representative of the Prohibition Party. At the same time the following alternates were named: Gilbert M. Peery, secretary-director for Mississippi, Jackson, Mississippi, Marshall S. Burns, of Lake Charles, Louisiana and Ira D. Crewdson, of Sac City, Iowa. Recipients of fellowships last year were Leo K. Bishop, director of the Round Table Conference of Christians and Jews, St. Louis, Missouri, and Thompson Shannon, pastor of First Christian Church, Portland, Oregon. The Yale School of Alcohol Studies is a constituent part of Yale University and its summer session brings to its classrooms a large number of outstanding authorities in the field of anthropology, sociology, psychology and psychiatry, medicine, chemistry, penology, law, public health, to deal with the various aspects of the alcohol problem.

Conscription Hearings to Start June Fourth

Chairman Clifton A. Woodrum, of the House Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy, has announced that hearings will begin before his committee on June 4th on the question of peacetime military conscription. The hearings will continue until June 16th. The purpose of the hearings is not to recommend legislation but to determine a policy which will be recommended to Congress. It is obvious therefore that the action of Chairman Woodrum's committee will be of the utmost consequence in determining whether or not the United States is to embark on the disastrous policy of military conscription that has plagued Europe for three-quarters of a century. If the committee recommends and Congress adopts a policy of military conscription, then it is only a matter of what type of conscription shall be adopted. The policy will have already been decided upon. In view of these facts it is highly important that letters be written to members of the Select Committee urging that such a policy be not recommended. Letters should also be written to the Congressman from your district and the two senators from your state. The following is the personnel of the Select Committee on Postwar Military Policy. Address them "Care House Office Building, Washington, D. C."

Clifton A. Woodrum (Va.)	Michael J. Bradley (Pa.)
Chairman	Lyndon B. Johnson (Texas)
Andrew J. May (Ky.)	Walter C. Andrews (N.Y.)
Carl Vinson (Ga.)	George J. Bates (Mass.)
Schuyler Otis Bland (Va.)	James W. Wadsworth (N.Y.)
Patrick H. Drewry (Va.)	Leo E. Allen (Ill.)
Alfred L. Bulwinkle (N.C.)	D. Lane Powers (N.J.)
R. Ewing Thomason (Texas)	James W. Mott (Ore.)
J. Buel Snyder (Pa.)	Dewey Short (Mo.)
Overton Brooks (La.)	Leslie A. Ahrends (Ill.)
J. J. Sparkman (Ala.)	W. Sterling Cole (N.Y.)
Harry R. Sheppard (Calif.)	Bernard W. Kearney (N.Y.)

On Social Frontiers

Among opportunities offered for summer study is that of the Institute of Industrial Relations of the University of Wisconsin, located at Madison. The institute will be under the direction of the University's School for Workers and will be held concurrently with the School's institutes for industrial workers and with the Town-Country Leadership Conference sponsored by the School of Agriculture. Courses to be offered are, The Emerging Social Order, Pressure Groups in American Society, Current Issues in Labor and Industry, The Religious Basis of Social Action, Minority Groups in American Society, and Techniques in Church-Labor Relations in the Community. The school is designed primarily for ministers serving churches located in industrial areas. The Department of Social Welfare can offer scholarship assistance to a few Disciple ministers who may wish to attend.

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The Chicago Committee on Racial Equality, affiliate of the Congress of Racial Equality, offers an opportunity for a limited number of persons to engage in non-violent direct action to help uproot 'Jim Crowism' in an American community during the coming summer. Chicago will be the scene of the project. The group will first undertake a study program on the race problem in the world and in the local community and techniques for resisting racism. It will also undertake to oppose restrictive covenants whereby Negroes are excluded from certain communities and segregated in areas where housing is poor and undesirable, make an effort to secure a change in the policies of Loop department stores that restrict Negro workers to menial positions, seek to abolish segregation in the YMCA, and oppose the discriminatory policies of the University of Chicago. Members of the project will be expected to accept the Action Discipline of the CORE, which obligates the individual, while opposing racial discriminations, to seek to maintain a friendly, humble, understanding attitude toward persons responsible for racial injustice and yet refuse to cooperate with them in any way in maintaining the practice. Volunteers are obligated not to meet violence with violence, but to maintain an attitude of goodwill. Inquiries should be addressed to George M. Houser, 7100 Kinsman Road, Cleveland 4, Ohio. The cost is estimated at \$1 per day per person.

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An Institute on Race Relations will be held at Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee, July 2-21, under the auspices of the American Missionary Association. A summer 'work shop' in race relations will be a feature of the program. Among the lecturers and discussion leaders will be Dr. Will W. Alexander, Edwin R. Embree, Charles H. Houston, member of the FEPC, Dr. Arthur L. Swift of Union Theological Seminary and Dr. Ira DeA Reid, professor of sociology in Atlanta University and director of the Southern Regional Council. The cost will be \$55 for the period. A few scholarships are available. Correspondence should be addressed to Dr. Charles S. Johnson, Fisk University, Nashville 8, Tennessee.

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A delegation appointed by the International Co-operative Alliance which visited Rouen and Amiens on behalf of the International Freedom Fund, reported that while the cooperative societies in these cities had suffered great damage and destruction, their leaders were confident of the restoration of the movement. On its return to London the committee recommended that ICA allot \$100,000 to provide transport vehicles to relieve serious food shortage in France.

Adoption Racket Still Flourishes

Some time ago *Social Action News-Letter* called attention to the wide-spread traffic in unwanted babies which has grown up under conditions of war. Taking advantage of the distress and desperation of young women, who in order to hide the fact of their pregnancy from family and friends, will agree to almost anything, these procurers offer to pay the expenses of hospitalization and find a home for the child. They then make a deal whereby the baby is sold, often for outrageous sums, to childless couples who are willing to enter into the unholy business in order to secure the baby. Instances are on record where these traffickers in innocence and helplessness have pocketed large sums for their rewards. The practice has grown to where not only are these inhuman merchants in babyhood selling the children of desperate unwed mothers, but are also buying and selling children out of families. Unfortunately, there seems to be a few fathers and mothers so lacking in all human instincts of love and affection that they are willing to sell their own flesh and blood for a price. That this traffic is assuming large proportions is indicated by the vigorous efforts of reputable social agencies to abolish it. The following excerpt from the *April News Sheet* of the department of Social Service of the Church Federation of Greater Chicago describes the "selfish and vicious" efforts of these people to protect their unholy business:

"Illinois is to the adoption racket what Reno is to easy divorce. More than 3000 children are adopted in Illinois each year. Children have, in known cases, been sold for adoption for from \$25 to \$2000.

"Our antiquated adoption law dates back to 1874 and lacks all social safeguards. It does not require an investigation of the adopting home nor of the child to be adopted to be sure that the adoption serves the best interests of that child: Some of the most notorious gangsters have adopted children in Illinois.

"The present law does not provide for a proper witnessing of the consent of the natural parents to the adoption. As a result of this lack, mothers have signed consents while under the influence of opiates or social pressures and their babies have been "spirited" away.

"A new adoption bill has been introduced to correct these evils. It provides for a mandatory investigation of the adopting home and the child; a six months' residence in the adopting home before completing the adoption; a proper witnessing of the natural parents' consent before the adoption; and confidential adoption records . . ."

Unfortunately this bill is yet pending. It ought to be passed. Every state in the Union should have adoption laws that provide for the protection of the child, for the mother, for the adopting home, and that places all adoptions under the supervision of the state welfare board. This latter provision, properly enforced would put out of business every procurer now in the business and would make it impossible for any person to buy or sell a child. Under such a law the state welfare authorities could not only investigate the adopting home to determine its suitability for the child, investigate the child's physical condition with a view of protecting the adopting home from adopting children that are physically or mentally defective, but they could also make certain that whatever financial arrangements were made were recorded in the confidential files of the welfare board. It goes without saying that no adoption should ever take place without going through the proper court procedure.

International Council Launches Radio Program

A new approach to religious education by radio, and one that is long overdue, was launched by the International Council of Religious Education on January 2nd when the first of its "Victorious Living" presentations was put on the air by 24 stations in 13 states. After five months the program is being carried by 88 stations in 27 states. Miss Pearl Rosser, director of radio education for the International Council is responsible for the program.

In its March issue *Social Action News-Letter* featured an article calling attention to the fact that despite some excellent programs such as that sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches, by certain local congregations, and a few radio stations such as WLW's "Church of the Air," religious radio has largely fallen into the hands of a group of irresponsible self-styled evangelists who represent nobody but themselves and are exploiting their opportunity to the tune of millions of dollars in offerings sent in response to fervent appeals. The need therefore for action on the part of responsible representative groups like the International Council is acute.

Although the "Victorious Living" program is still in its swaddling clothes it has already won enviable recognition. The series has been awarded one of three citations in the field of religious broadcasts by the Institute for Education by Radio Ohio State University. The award was made for "effective use of simple, authentic stories by which to convey religious principles and for the format which makes for wide usability." The citation also states that "the series is a worthy one and unique in the field of religious education. It utilizes a modern medium intelligently to do a public service job for its audience."

Written and narrated by the Rev. E. Jerry Walker, director of radio production for the Council, "Victorious Living" is a transcribed program presented six days a week under the auspices of the International Council and 15 denominational boards of education and publishing houses of communions holding membership in the Council, in cooperation with state and city councils of churches and Christian education, local ministerial associations, laymen's inter-Church organizations and other religious groups.

Livingston Academy Program to be Expanded

The board of trustees of The United Society has appropriated funds to complete the agriculture and shop building at Livingston Academy, Livingston, Tennessee, begun some years ago under WPA auspices and abandoned when that program was liquidated. Livingston Academy is the only high school in the county except a small unaccredited school meeting in an elementary school building in one section of the county. The new building will house an expanded agriculture program and shop tools for training students and for use of farmers of the county. The school has for the past two years been under the principalship of Ralph Prather, of Vincennes, Indiana, well known to younger Disciples as a dean of young peoples conferences. Under the leadership of Mr. Prather and William D. Hall, minister of the Livingston church and, with Mrs. Hall, under appointment as missionary to India, a youth center has recently been constructed, using hitherto unused basement space in the Academy building. Other improvements now under way are the installation of a new heating system and repainting of both the interior and the exterior of the building.

Federal Council Group Plans (continued)

the church of his or her choice, irrespective of race. Segregated churches fall short of the requirements of the Christian ideal. The Church is obligated by its Christian charter to go further than hotels, theatres, government, restaurants, social clubs and political parties . . . The Church sets the pattern for other institutions of society. It is also a matter of its own integrity. Either the Church must be actually and potentially a Church for all the people, irrespective of race and color, or it should cease to proclaim the doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. If the Churches cannot do this they should be honest with themselves and say that in the area of race relations we cannot preach and practice the whole gospel."

The issues presented by these Negro Christian leaders—and they include such names as President Charles H. Wesley of Wilberforce University, President William Lloyd Imes, of Knoxville, Tenn., President J. M. Ellison of Virginia Union University, President Benjamin E. Mays of Morehouse College and Vice-President of the Federal Council, Dr. Channing Tobias of the International Committee of the YMCA, besides a number of prominent bishops, pastors and laymen—cannot be evaded by the Church. These men and women strike at the vulnerable point in our armor. They challenge us not only with our own preaching about the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man, but they convict us of disloyalty to the expressed teachings of Christ and the practices of the primitive church. The simple fact is that the American church is far below the Christian norm in its conduct with reference to racial and color groups and it must repent and repent quickly if it is not to forfeit its opportunity to meet the needs of the world in an hour when doctrines of racial superiority have brought its German proponents to almost irretrievable disaster.

After San Francisco — What? (continued)

the Big Three, a fact which Hitler counted on almost to the last hour of his life to divide the United Nations and give him a chance to grab a desperate victory.

The framework of the proposed united nations organization should therefore be the subject of earnest and serious study by American citizens immediately upon its publication. It is unfortunate that the plan will likely be released at the beginning of summer vacation, but that fact will have to be faced realistically. For peace groups like the Commission on World Order of the Disciples of Christ, the Commission on a Just and Durable Peace of the Federal Council and the peace commissions of the various communions, it may mean the choice between vacations and vigorous, united efforts to get the plan studied by their constituencies. If Congress remains in session to deal with the question of the adherence of the United States the need for unremitting effort will be all the more imperative. *This may be our last chance to build a world organization for peace and security.* To fumble the ball now is to lose the game.

As soon as the plan is released the Commission on World Order will put it in the hands of every church in the brotherhood with suggestions as to study and action. Every section and every proposal should be given the most serious and careful study and compared with the recommendations of the Oxford Conference, the Delaware Conference, the Cleveland Conference and our own Drake Conference. In the light of these recommendations, further enlightened by the Scriptures and by serious study and prayer, the churches must make up their minds and act.